

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for disseminating heterogeneous data through branded electronic information delivery channels, as herein described with reference to accompanying drawings, that combines:

- (a) electronic information content intended for access and use by content recipients using an apparatus on a computing device, with
- (b) brand identifying attributes that can control the apparatus through which each content recipient views or otherwise makes use of the electronic information content such that the branding is reflected in the apparatus's visual and aural characteristics.

2. The method of claim 1, where the method may further comprise one or more of the following steps:

- (a) associating control elements to the electronic information content such that these control elements control the sequence in which the content can be viewed or otherwise accessed by the content recipient, and
- (b) using an apparatus on the content recipient's computing device that will monitor and record metrics about the content recipient's use of the electronic information content and will revert such gathered metrics to the provider of the content.

3. An apparatus that facilitates the dissemination of heterogeneous data through branded electronic information delivery channels, as herein described with reference to accompanying drawings, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) an authoring apparatus for associating brand identifiers with electronic information content and publishing such content with associated brand identifiers,
- (b) a content hub that facilitates the exchange of content with associated brand identifiers, and
- (c) a client apparatus for viewing and otherwise using content with associated brand identifiers:

4. The apparatus of claim 3, where the authoring apparatus further comprises the following components:

- (a) a brand attributes apparatus for managing the brand identifiers that are applied to the client apparatus when the content recipient uses the client apparatus to view or otherwise use electronic information content provided by the content service provider, such brand identifiers controlling the visual and aural characteristics of the client apparatus;
- (b) a content management apparatus for managing the electronic information content so as to be able to group one or more content items into a set of content for publication and distribution to content recipients; and
- (c) a publishing and metrics retrieval apparatus for passing electronic information content with associated brand identifiers to the content hub.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the content management apparatus may also be used to facilitate the sequencing, availability and interactivity of the electronic information content items, such that when a content recipient eventually makes use of a set of content, the content recipient will be restricted to using or interacting with the content items in accordance with the sequence and manner defined within the content management apparatus.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the publishing and metrics retrieval apparatus may also be used to facilitate the retrieval of user metrics information from the content hub.

7. The apparatus of claim 3, where the authoring apparatus may further comprise one or more of the following components:

- (a) a user management apparatus for managing the list of authorized recipients of electronic information content;
- (b) a distribution management apparatus for determining which recipients will receive particular items or sets of electronic information content, including the facility to specify which content items within a particular content set each content recipient will receive, such that some content recipients may only receive a sub-set of all of the content items within a content set made available to other content recipients; and

- (c) a user metrics apparatus for viewing, analyzing, generating reports on and otherwise making use of user metrics data gathered from client apparatuses.

8. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the content hub further comprises a publishing and metrics retrieval apparatus for receiving information from the authoring apparatus, including electronic information content with associated brand identifiers.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the content hub may further comprises a publishing and metrics retrieval apparatus for passing information to the authoring apparatus, including user metrics information.

10. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the content hub further comprises a content retrieval and metrics upload apparatus for passing information to the client apparatus, including electronic information content with associated brand identifiers.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the content hub may further comprises a content retrieval and metrics upload apparatus for retrieval of information from the client apparatus, including of user metrics information.

12. The apparatus of claim 3, where the client apparatus further comprises the following components:

- (a) a client alerter apparatus for periodically checking for new or updated electronic information content at one or more content hubs and retrieving such content with its associated brand identifiers, and
- (b) a viewer apparatus for viewing or otherwise using the electronic information content retrieved from a content hub while at the same time taking on the visual and aural attributes of the brand identifiers associated with the respective content.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, where the client alerter apparatus may further be used to provide one or more of the following functions:

- (a) providing an alert through a variety of means, including but not limited to the use of icons, sounds or messages on the content recipient's computing device or other devices used by the content recipient, so that the content

recipient will become aware that new electronic information content is available within the client apparatus; and

- (b) passing user metrics information to the content hub.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the viewer apparatus may further be used to monitor the content recipient's use of the electronic information content items and to store such metrics about this usage within a database within the client apparatus.

15. A communication system for disseminating heterogeneous data, said communication system comprising:

an authoring apparatus for associating brand identifiers with electronic information content and publishing such content with associated brand identifiers, said authoring apparatus comprising a visualization engine and an assembler;

a client apparatus for viewing and otherwise using content with associated brand identifiers;

an executive apparatus for viewing and otherwise using content with associated brand identifiers and viewing or otherwise using metrics that relate to using patterns of said content by said client apparatus; and

a web server for interconnecting said authoring apparatus, said client apparatus, and said executive apparatus, said web server comprising an engine, a database and a replicant database, wherein said engine processes requests from said client apparatus, said authoring apparatus, and said executive apparatus;